

Town of Bloomfield  
Economic Development Commission Meeting  
800 Bloomfield Avenue, Conference Room #5  
DRAFT MINUTES  
TUESDAY, April 12, 2016

**Present:** Jerry Long, Bonnie Bercowetz, Harold Harper, Michelle Bononi, Fred Hesketh, and Jerry Katrichis, Richard McDermott

Also present: Director of Planning and Economic Development, José Giner, Phillip Schenck, Town Manager, Mayor Joan Gamble, Don Poland, Rob Rowson, Dale Bertoldi, Roberta LaMonaca, Director of Library Services, Mark Weisman, Chair Prosser Library Building Committee, Lois Hager, Prosser Library Committee Member, Councilman Joel Neuwirth, Nancy Haynes, David Mann, Kevin Gough, and Laura James, Recording Secretary

1. Chairman Long called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.
2. **Minutes**  
*Commissioner Hesketh made a motion to accept the minutes of March 8, 2016 with corrections, Commissioner Bercowetz seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*
3. **Public Comment**  
No comments
4. **Update on Library Building Study – Mark Weisman**  
Mr. Weisman, Chair of the Prosser Library Building Committee, stated that the committee was formed at the end of November, 2015. The Committee's charge is to seek a new facility for the Prosser Public Library. The State has guidelines that are to be met in order to obtain a construction grant of up to one million dollars and they are following those guidelines. The current library is 20,000 square feet and the Committee is looking to recommend that the Town build a 36,000 square foot facility. In terms of budget they have been through two rounds of estimation and will continue as they go through the conceptual process. The projected cost is currently looking between \$18.8 million dollars and \$22.4 million dollars. Mr. Weisman stated they have also looked at what is available in Town as a shared space program. They also looked at whether sharing space with the proposed renovations to the Human Services building at 330 Park Avenue would be cost effective. The preliminary study being conducted by another firm shows that it would be more cost effective to build something new at 330 Park rather than renovate. They also looked at possibility of moving the library to the Wintonbury Mall site. Mr. Weisman stated the only way of making the Mall site work would be if there were a complete redevelopment of the Mall site. He stated that the owner of the Mall is not interested in a complete renovation. Mr. Weisman stated they have pretty much given up on pursuing the Wintonbury Mall as an option.  
Mr. Weisman stated they have been looking at two other variations. The first is the option of raising the entire existing building up, because the lower floor of the building is in a designated Flood Zone. Mr. Weisman stated that the Committee concluded that the best location would be to have the Library on Park Avenue next to the Town Hall.

Mr. Weisman further stated Goman and York have been very helpful in this process. He said that the Committee will present the final recommendations at the end of the month to the Town Council and will be going to the Finance sub-committee next month and with their final numbers.

Mr. Weisman stated that the economic development implications are very real as to where the library will be located. The Committee is asking the EDC to endorse the Library should staying in the Town Center. He also asked how the EDC feels about the potential private development of the current library site.

Commissioner Bercowetz stated she is very interested in Goman and York's point of view on the Library. Mr. Poland stated their preliminary conclusion is the existing site is very small and adding square footage presented challenges and it is not the optimal site. As far as the Town Center plan, the Town has the opportunity to lead the vision for the Town Center. If the Library is constructed on Park Avenue area it would be pushed out to the street on the northeast corner of the Town Hall site, adjacent to Rite Aid. Mr. Poland stated they have attended all but one meeting and were asked to weigh in on all four sites. Mr. Poland stated that Goman + York believes that the Town Hall site was the best location. Mr. Poland stated there is not a strong anchor for the Town Center and the Library is a critical institution and strong link in the Economic Development of the Town Center. He concluded that removal of the library from the Town Center would be detrimental. Mr. Poland passed out a handout of the assessment of the potential four locations. Prosser Library's existing site is very constrained with the lower level below flood grade. The existing building could lend itself to professional office use and lower level be used for parking.

Chairman Long asked the members when they would be available for a Special meeting to discuss the Prosser Library building. A special meeting was scheduled for April 18, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.

## **5. Staff & Commission Member Update**

- a. New and ongoing construction,** Mr. Giner stated the Planning Department added a new Assistant Building Official to help out with permit review and inspections. Permit activity for last six months is at \$1.7 Million as compared to a budget estimate of \$800,000 for fiscal year, therefore they are way ahead of revenue estimates. Mr. Giner stated 580 Cottage Grove Road had a \$1.2-million-dollar surgical center fit out and McDonald's is rebuilding the whole store. Cigna continues to spend money on the existing facility, which is a good sign. ABB, Advanced Robotics Company which is very high tech is moving into the old Culbro building which is on the new Phoenix Crossing off Blue Hills Avenue is doing about \$612,000 dollars' worth of building construction. The old aeronautics CREC school at 1289 Blue Hills Avenue is being repurposed for children with special needs and is undergoing a remodeling of about \$200,000. Mr. Giner stated 35 Jolley Drive has a \$100,000 medical fit out on the second floor. Mr. Giner further stated he received a report from the Building Official that the OSTA permit for the Niagara Bottling site has been issued which triggered additional building permits. Deringer-Ney is finishing up their building. Kaman is doing some phase II reconfiguring of parking lots and construction which connects the two buildings. Mr. Giner stated Gillette Ridge is doing some renovations and is hoping to open up in May or June. Mr. Giner reported that the buildings at the old Gas Station and the old Liberty Tax building opposite the corner of Blue Hills Avenue and Park Avenue will be demolished and O'Reilly's Auto Parts will be going in there in the very near future.
- b. Wintonbury Mall,** Mr. Giner stated he received an email regarding a fairly large sign they wish to put in. Mr. Driver stated that the Wintonbury Mall Owner has very little interest in any upgrades to the building. Mr. Rowson stated that he feels that no tenants of any quality

will go into the Wintonbury Mall because of the condition of the building. Mr. Rowlson also stated his opinion that the Wintonbury Mall Owner overpaid the purchase price of the Mall.

- c. **Filley Park**, Mr. Giner stated they are finishing up the work on Phase I and Phase II bid documents being reviewed and will go out to bid in the next month or two. Chairman Long asked has the budget issue of money been addressed. Mr. Phil Schenck stated there is another \$500,000 dollars in the capital improvement budget at the beginning of the next fiscal year July 1st. DEEP requires certain times for work to be done, and if there are delays the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase could extend into next year, but hoping to get done this year. It is really a five to six phase project. It may not look very pleasant this summer because they will be dredging and digging out the pond. The Council is committed to the project and very good feedback from the community. Commissioner Bononi asked who the key person for coordinating the project at the Town is. Mr. Schenck replied that it was Jonathan Thiesse, Town Engineer.

d. **Goman & York**

**Bloomfield Center Business Alliance**

Mr. Rowlson stated the next meeting of the merchants group will be Monday, April 18, 2016, 8:30 a.m. The Merchant Group has asked to expand invitations to the Geissler property. Mr. Rowlson stated he was away from the last two meetings, but will get caught up on Monday.

**Etc.**

Mr. Schenck reported that the Town is assisting in an event sponsored by Carbone's on June 23, 2016. There is a mailing list of 50,000 for the event and Town agreed to participate by paying for a tent. There will also be a concert the same evening on the Town Green. He felt this was a great opportunity to showcase the Town Center businesses. Mr. Schenck is asking the EDC to think of how this event could promote the Town. Mr. Schenck stated while dining at Carbone's he noticed a sign about Prosser Library. Ms. LaMonaca stated that it is National Library week and the theme is Libraries Transformed. Last year Carbone's sponsored a cocktail for book lovers promotion. For each drink purchased Carbone's will contribute \$1.00 to the Building Fund. Ms. LaMonaca stated she received permission from Shawn Bidsal to use one of the windows of the Wintonbury Mall to promote Libraries Transformed.

Mr. Poland stated he put together a memo regarding limits or restrictions on alcohol in the Town Center, BCD Zone. Removing these limits would open up the opportunity for more restaurants within the Town Center. Mr. Poland asked EDC if this could be added to the agenda for next months' meeting to have a formal discussion.

e. **Other topics**

Mr. Joel Neuwirth stated Celebrated Bloomfield is coming on June 1<sup>st</sup> – June 5<sup>th</sup>, there will be at least eleven events in the week hopefully everyone will attend. Anika-Noni Rose will be present at the event. Mr. Schenck stated there is a link of the Town website to take a look at some of the Filley Park pictures.

6. **Public Comment**

Kevin Gough, 5 Bear Ridge Drive, Mr. Gough thanked the Commission for adding public comments at the beginning and end of the agenda. Mr. Gough stated that he believes that the outcome of Library Project has already been determined. He believed that the concept of shared space is an interesting idea to be pursued. One concern of his is the timing. The residents are now finding out and starting to make comments which should be taken into consideration. Mr. Gough would like to see more options and discussions. He stated that the Wintonbury Mall situation is very frustrating and that residents want to see action as far as economic development in the Center. Mr. Gough stated that he doesn't understand why the wires at Filley Park have

not been buried. Mr. Gough extended an invitation to the EDC to attend the CEEC future meetings.

David Mann, 1 Adams road, member of CEEC, stated he is glad the Library is considering staying in the Town Center and he would not like to see the Library moved to 330 Park Avenue site. Mr. Mann stated that it is depressing that the Wintonbury Mall owner does not want to make any investments in the Mall. He stated that if we put the Library there, we would be adding to their value while they do nothing.

There will be a Special Meeting on Monday, April 18, 2016. Next regular EDC meeting May 10, 8:30 a.m.

## **7. Adjournment**

*Commissioner Bercowetz made a motion to adjourn at 9:48 a.m. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Katrichis and passed unanimously.*